

To The Editorial Board of the Oregonian:

The staff, students and parents of Jefferson high School were shocked and disappointed to read the May 23rd article and the May 26th editorial in the Oregonian concerning Jefferson and its progress this year. The Jefferson family is struggling to understand Mr. Ottey's motivation for writing such a subjective piece of journalism and feel compelled to respond to his inaccurate and distorted view of the efforts and progress being made toward turning Jefferson student achievement around.

Rather than objectively measure Jefferson's success against the Redesign Plan Goals, it appears that Mr. Ottey decided to measure our progress subjectively based on what he felt should be the results of hard work and commitment to our students. Our accomplishments, which can be identified based on the Redesign Plan, speak for themselves. A quarterly report by the Northwest Regional Lab indicates the following:

- A fourteen-member Site Council has completed work on a School Improvement Plan that will drive our work with students for the next three years.
- A comprehensive counseling plan is in place for the first time.
- A new attendance plan is in place.
- A discipline committee met all year to craft a new discipline plan which will be implemented in September.

Significant progress has been made in creating a school-wide area network, including e-mail access throughout the building.

An Intel challenge has been made in creating a school-education department for life skills instruction.

Two computer labs, an Apple-based and a PC-based, have been developed and are used daily by teachers and students.

Professional development in the

following areas are ongoing or have occurred. Working with at-risk youth, portfolio and work sample assessment, drug and alcohol awareness, TRIBES overview, and collaboration. Sessions on the Certificate of Initial Master and Proficiency Admissions Standards for all staff have been conducted.

Three consultants assist school staff with planning for the Certificate of Advanced Mastery.

The first group of seniors graduates in June from the Health Science BioTech Academy.

The article and the editorial are also disturbing because they were not based on accurate data. In writing his article, Mr. Ottey had the opportunity to use accurate data and chose not to. He does not claim to have data that neither Jefferson, PPS nor the State yet has. He also had the opportunity to quote accurately but he chose to quote out of context and create his own quotes.

I would like to take this opportunity to correct some of the inaccuracies of Mr. Ottey's article, some alternatives of which were repeated in the editorial.

Oregonian:

"Jefferson began the year with about 400 freshmen, but half have since dropped out, moved to alternative programs or transferred to other schools.

Fact:

Jefferson began the school year with 292 freshmen. There are currently

252 freshmen enrolled at Jefferson. This is a decrease of 40 students, not 200 freshmen. This decrease represents a 13.5% decrease not 50% as reported by Mr. Ottey.

Oregonian:

"Spotty attendance remains a problem."

Fact:

Average daily attendance has improved. The chart below is taken from the A-1 report submitted monthly to PPS and the state and compares last year's attendance to current attendance.

	1997/98	1998/99
Sept.	80%	94%
Oct.	73%	83%
Nov.	70%	89%
Dec.	71%	90%
Jan.	71%	88%
Feb.	67%	90%
Mar.	68%	92%
Apr.	69%	92%

Oregonians:

"Test scores are still very low. More than two-thirds of 10th graders this year failed to meet the statewide benchmark for math achievement."

Fact:

The State has not released the assessment scores for this year. Neither the District nor Jefferson high School has test scores available.

Mr. Ottey was informed that no test scores were available.

Oregonian:

Disciplinary actions in 1997/98 resulted in 6 expulsions from school. As of March 1999 there have been a total of 19 expulsions for severely misbehaving students.

Jerry Conrath provided the staff with training on dealing with disruptive students.

Michael Grice presented a workshop on understanding culture and how to effectively deal with disruptive students in the classroom.

The number of Deans to work with disruptive students was increased from 2 to 3.

A student Assistance Team (SAT) was created to review behavioral referrals on students demonstrating continual disruptive behavior in the classroom. Five intervention teams were created to conduct intensive one-on-one interventions with chronically dis-

ruptive students and their parents or guardians.

An in-school detention center is in place to provide supervision and redirection for disruptive students.

An after school detention center is in place and teachers are able to refer students.

Oregonians:

"Some 30 percent of students in the Jefferson attendance areas choose to go to other Portland high schools."

Fact:

This has been the trend for several years. This is not new information.

Oregonians:

"Roberts has committed to staying only one more year at Jefferson."

Fact:

I have continually stated to staff, students, parents and the District that I will stay as long as it takes to get the job done.

Michael Ottey was not told that I intended to return for only one year. He has been informed on several occasions that I will remain until the job is done, or one of the vice-principals is prepared to assume the principalship.

Michael Ottey attended a Town Hall meeting at Jefferson. I spoke to an audience of parents and community members and assured them that I was at Jefferson for the long haul and that in fact I was mentoring two vice-principals as potential candidates for the principalship at Jefferson.

and community members and assured them that I was at Jefferson for the long haul and that in fact I was mentoring two vice-principals as potential candidates for the principalship at Jefferson.

Oregonians:

"She seriously considered not returning at all." "Roberts said she is considering a run for political office."

Fact:

I did not tell Mr. Ottey that I was seriously considering not returning to Jefferson.

I have no plan or desire to run for political office.

Oregonians:

The photo, which appeared with the Sunday article, showed a classroom full of empty seats.

Fact:

The photo was actually taken prior to the arrival of students for class.

The attendance of one class one day does not reflect the reality of the schools attendance, any more than one reporter represents the entire Oregonian staff.

It should be clear that much of the information presented in Mr. Ottey's article and the subsequent repetition of it in the editorial have made the task of revitalizing Jefferson a much more difficult task. It is just this sort of misinformation that has been instrumental in Jefferson's decline. While we do not except the truth to be glossed over, neither do we expect misinformation to masquerade as truth. We feel that Mr. Ottey and the Oregonian have done the Jefferson community and the readership of the paper as a whole a great disservice by their inaccurate and very negative reporting and editorializing. We hope to see more fair and accurate reporting in the future.

Enrollment Change

October - February - May

Oct. 97	Feb. 98	May 98	# changed	%Retained	#changed	%Retained
		Oct.-Feb.	Oct. - May	Oct. - May	Oct. - May	Oct. - May
990	863	811	-127	87.2	-179	81.9
Oct. 98	Feb. 99	May 99	# changed	%Retained	#changed	%Retained
		Oct.-Feb.	Oct. - Feb	Oct. - May	Oct. - May	Oct. - May
916	922	855	-6	90.7	-61	93.3

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